



Luigi Dollosa



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PREFACE

Philosophy was one of the disciplines I was highly interested in ever since. And for a large part, morality and ethics seem to be two of the matters that I was willing to study and to contemplate in order to be well-grounded on philosophy. What is right? What is wrong? What is good and bad? These are questions that may be seemingly trivial to a general mind. But I, as a very reflective person, take these subjects of thought seriously and with very high regards. Not only do they stimulate the rationalism of the mind, but it paves the way for a person, every aspiring ethicist like me, to further delve into self-discovery, a lifelong exploration of what we deem as the mysteries of existence.

Our endeavor in our class ITETHIC (I.T Ethics) was the perfect venue for me to exercise my chaotic thought processes on the profoundness of the human mind, and to an extent, the human soul. Our academic course was more than a scholastic learning experience; I perceived it as path that will lead me closer to the cravings of my curiosity on the puzzling state of societal morality. Indeed, by being immersed with the readings that our class needed to comply with, I was lead as well to the way of healthy reflection – something that I was looking forward as a holistic enlightenment of my inner self and of my outer surroundings.

This book, Ethics and Beyond, is a venture of my mind as a newbie ethicist. This is basically a collection of all of my personal reflections towards the contexts of each author's literature. Beyond learning with an objective disposition, I was exposed to the different spectrums of views of esteemed ethicists of our history – from the radical ones to the conservative ones, from the logical ones to the intuitive ones. In reading between the lines of chapter one of the book Contemporary Moral Problems by James White, my mind was made aware of the foundations of ethics – the theories, views, and arguments put forth from the time of Aristotle to the more modern eras of Baier. I saw the evolution of ethics and the factors that affected the human thought into claiming moral principles that are now uphold by the global society.

Not to keep you long, I now proudly give you the key to my mind, some chaotic place where countless ideas abound. I hope that you will appreciate leafing through my learning experiences put into writing, and for this occasion, about ethics and beyond!

- Luigi

DEDICATION

To my parents...

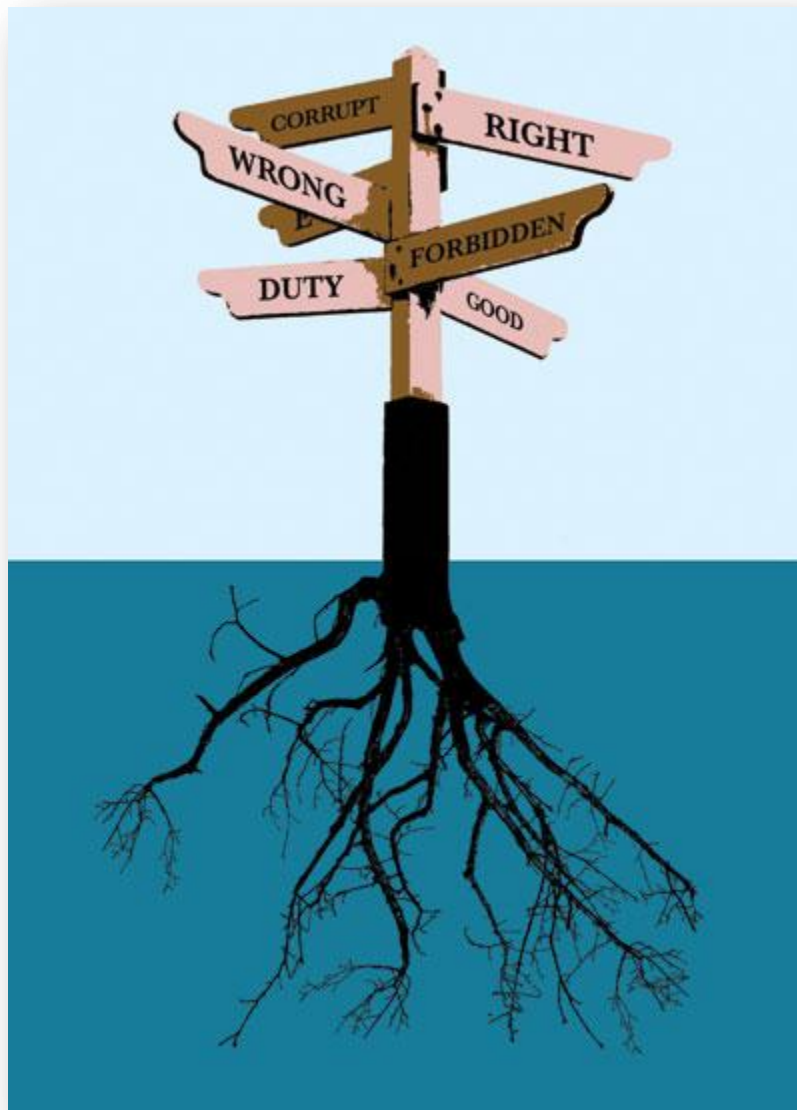
... who taught me right from wrong early on
...they were indeed the best

Contemporary Moral Problems

James White

CHAPTER ONE

ETHICAL THEORIES



CHAPTER

James Rachels: Egoism and Moral Scepticism

WHAT I EXPECT TO LEARN

I expect to learn the definition, scope, and claims about Egoism and Moral Skepticism, and their respective real-life applications and case-scenarios.

QUOTE

“But the answer is clearly No; while a great many human actions are motivated entirely or in part by self-interest, only by a deliberate distortion of the facts can we say that all conduct is so motivated.”

“For these ills, philosophy alone is not the cure.”

REVIEW

I'd like to first make a commentary about the placing of this article at the start of the book – it was a great head start of what we ought to expect for the entire paperback. I was fascinated with how they opened the book with what the author's very mind-stimulating writings. James Rachels elucidated perfectly his own arguments, defending and refuting, the claims of the main topic of the article, Egoism. And I was lead to the generalization that perusing the book from here on would not be as dragging as I initially anticipated; in fact, I found the ideas presented by various authors of the book hard to put down for consecutive hours.

Now off to my very first review for the book, and I'm pretty pressured to start it in fashion (though I admit that this would just be a sort of intellectual warm-up for me). The primary subject matter was about EGOISM, particularly elaborating its two sons – Psychological egoism and Ethical egoism. The former is officially defined as “the view that all men are selfish in everything that they do, that is, that the only motive from which anyone ever acts is self-interest”; whereas the latter is referred as “the view that, regardless of how men do in fact behave, they have no obligation to do anything except what is in their own interests”.

Skimming through the mentioned definitions, we are lead to two vital terminologies: “selfishness” and “self-interest” which are bound to be differentiated so as to avoid inconsistencies with how we can attack both views. It is said, according to Rachels, that they totally differ because being ‘self-interested’ does not entail that one will be ‘selfish’, as being ‘selfish’, “ignores the interests of others, in circumstances in which their interests ought not to

be ignored.” This leads us into the weakness of Psychological egoism, as it clearly states that men are naturally, inherently, and instinctively selfish. To be selfish means that the object of our self-interest means only the self, which can be defended by the fact, that not in all occasions does human behavior derive its satisfaction by mere self-interest, in some, we also seek the interests of our neighbor.

Proceeding with Ethical egoism, Rachels explains in the latter part that the view cannot be refuted, simply because it contains no logical error; as he says, “He cannot be refuted by the claim that he contradicts himself.” The basic argument to support this is by taking an open-minded standpoint in comprehending the Ethical egoists view by taking into mind that such person has an ideal mindset that he possesses to realize his convictions. One cannot advocate Ethical egoism to every individual, hence, cannot be universalized; that in so doing, one only ends up advocating altruism so as to accomplish the goal of ‘obligated’ self-interest, ironically. However, this is not in any way inconsistent with what he has in mind (the world I said earlier), for he is actually realizing his intended goal in the first place. Logically correct, but very strange I might say as Rachels put it to end his propositions, “Indeed, a man without any sympathy at all would scarcely be recognizable as a man; and that is what makes ethical egoism such a disturbing doctrine in the first place.”

WHAT I HAVE LEARNED

- Definitions and Differences of Ethical and Psychological egoism
- Propositions and counterexamples (more on real applications)
- Difference of selfishness and self-interest
- Weaknesses of egoism
- Ethical egoism cannot be universalized yet cannot be refuted
- Psychological egoism is flawed, and ethical egoism is disturbing

INTEGRATIVE QUESTIONS

- What is Egoism? Differentiate Psychological and Ethical egoism.
- Explain the arguments and counter-arguments of both.
- How true or untrue are the theories of egoism?
- Is there a difference between selfishness and self-interest?

CHAPTER

John Arthur: Religion, Morality, and Conscience

WHAT I EXPECT TO LEARN

I expect to learn the definition, scope, and claims John Arthur states on the three topics: Religion, Morality, and Conscience, and their respective real-life applications and case-scenarios.

QUOTE

“Only through the powers of imagination can we exercise our moral powers envisioning with the powers of judgment what conscience requires.”

REVIEW

I find this writing very balanced, in a way that the author, John Arthur, gives his and other's views appealing to all the parties concerned, including the religious people, and the general crowd. Simply put, he debunked theories, and yet he gave his own take on how the notions of religion and morality can be intertwined in the context of the material.

The article covered three main areas (as stated in the title): Religion, Morality, and Conscience. What he first delved into was the definition and notions of religion and morality, respectively and associatively. His first assertion was that religion was not necessary for morality and gave various claims to support this argument. First, he asserts that there can be other motives for people to act morally other than religious motivation; case in point, is a decent upbringing, rational evaluation of situations confronting moral decisions, or just inherent human instincts that uphold moral virtues. Secondly, he argues that the Divine Command theory is also flawed, in the sense that God, sets the foundation for morality through revelation, and revelation is too complex for human understanding either. In fact, he points out that revelation, interpretation particularly, is actually influenced more by previously held moral guidelines by individuals on themselves. This brings me to the bottom-line, that, with logical and practical reasoning, religion is not at all necessary for morality, instead it occurs that it is the other way around-morality, more likely, becomes the basis for religion, thus, providing a counteract for religious motivation and the Divine Command Theory.

The article goes further with Arthur explaining the interrelatedness of morality and religion, stating that the connection between these two areas is that, historically, they have and are still influencing each other, more in areas like politics, law, and education. The author also touched

on the topic of Conscience, as headway for the notion, “Morality is social”. He proceeds with his beliefs that, since conscience is deeply swayed by the ‘thinking’ of other people and their reactions towards each individual’s action and behavior, conscience is therefore a result of an individual’s concern of his public impression. He goes on as he quotes and supports Dewey, when the proponent asserts that, “Conscience demands we occupy the positions of others”. What Dewey is pointing out is a conscience that is imaginative and ideal, that before people can enact their actions, they conceive it through thought, and judge their actions prior it being acted upon in the basis of how the external crowd is going to react on it. Thus, religion plays a role in conscience-building, as God occupies a part with the panel that is going to perceive the action as morally right or wrong. Arthur ends in stating that with all of his mentioned premises, morality is an area that should be molded through formation and reflection, hence, claiming that moral education is essential for morality.

WHAT I HAVE LEARNED

- Definitions of Morality and Religion, and how they are connected yet distinct
- Morality influences religion, and vice-versa
- Morality is necessary for religion, but not vice-versa
- Morality is social because of Conscience
- Moral education is important for reflection, which builds the conscience, which establishes moral conduct

INTEGRATIVE QUESTIONS

- Why or why not is religion needed for moral conduct?
- Why is morality social?
- How are the Religious Motivation and Divine Commands Theory refuted?

CHAPTER

Friedrich Nietzsche: Master and Slave Morality

WHAT I EXPECT TO LEARN

I expect to learn the definition, scope, and claims Friedrich Nietzsche states on the topics of Master and Slave Morality and their respective real-life applications and case-scenarios.

QUOTE

“Its fundamental belief must be precisely that society is not allowed to exist for its own sake, but only as a foundation and scaffolding, by means of which a select class of beings may be able to elevate themselves to their higher duties, and in general to a higher existence.”

REVIEW

I admit at first that the author's writing style makes it hard for newbie ethicists to understand and comprehend his notions and perspectives of how society is presupposed to behave, in the context of his work on Master and Slave morality. It seems that, with the help of a plenty more rereads of the material, I don't quite achieve progress in understanding the heart of the matter; it's as if I'm lead to the conclusion that Nietzsche is indeed a radical thought leader. In light of this, I'm quite satisfied that I was left of an impression that ethical philosophy will be expected to encompass topics on sociology, into which I was particularly interested, although his work don't seem to elucidate much on the area, partially due to his sophisticated writing style.

Moving on, I'm pretty sure that Nietzsche refers to Master and Slave morality as a distinct, opposite view into which society holds its constituents. Master morality pertains to the morality of the higher class, the ones dominating the echelons, the ones with the height, power, and influence; and as such, they are intrinsically employing the behavior of self-glorification, control, and strength, and on the other hand, slave morality entails the complete opposite – surrender, weakness, compassion, and submission. He further states that morality in a certain society is dictated by the noble men, the ones with the Master morality, for with power comes their credibility, and as they dictate what should be deemed good will be objectively perceived good by the rest of the social group. It came into my mind, that a good instance for this is the concept of social institutions, and with a connection of the previous article, further builds on the notion that morality is social. What the 'top-men' think as good, will always be what the rest, in essence the 'lower' ones attributed with Slave morality, be subject to obedience through forced belief.

Such convictions are truly radical, yet it comes to me as that I need to research more on the author's background to see how his mind has molded him to think this way. I don't in any way disagree with his views, since history holds, and sociology seems to back up on his claims; I was to generalize this as a result of empirical evidence, one of which stems out from observation of the contemporary state of social interaction.

WHAT I HAVE LEARNED

- Definitions of and distinctions of Master and Slave morality
- Master morality is synonymous to power, Slave morality is to weakness
- Higher classes dictate the moral code, the general people will be submissive to this
- The 'good' will always be Master morality for weakness occurs in slave virtues

INTEGRATIVE QUESTIONS

1. What is Master and Slave morality? Differentiate.
2. What then is the 'good' according to Nietzsche?
3. How are Master and Slave morality exhibited in the modern social context between countries?

CHAPTER

Mary Midgely: Trying Out One's New Sword

WHAT I EXPECT TO LEARN

I expect to learn the definition, scope, and claims Mary Midgely states on the topics of Cultural Relativism, Cultural Isolationism, and Subjectivism and their respective real-life applications and case-scenarios.

QUOTE

"If we can't judge other cultures, can we really judge our own? Our efforts to do so will be much damaged if we really deprived of our opinions about other societies, because these provide the range of comparison, the spectrum of alternatives against which we set what we want to understand."

REVIEW

This fourth article is somehow refreshing, in the sense that, it is what beginning ethicists can relate to, but can still enable us to have our own solid judgments on the matter; it is very assistive to us in the practice of reasoning in modern world societal issues. Here, Mary Midgley, discusses one main school of thought, Cultural Isolationism, which comes from Cultural Relativism, and also associated with Subjectivism. She argues that she is not in favor of Cultural Isolationism, and elaborates her counterarguments to support such claims of hers on the subject at hand.

Her first step is to explain what the 'barrier', a metaphorical substitute for the concept of Cultural Isolationism, in its practical context by citing the cultural tradition of the Chinese in tsujigiri – the custom of having a samurai sword be tested by bisecting a chance wayfarer. The Chinese culture tolerates this practice, despite it being rejected by the Western culture. And from this stems out the 'barrier', that with different cultures having different beliefs, one cannot judge a particular culture by means of comparison by their own culture, especially in issues and practices that they don't share alike.

Midgley claims that one should deny the barrier, and states her own reasons for pointing it out. First, she mentions that, outsiders can actually judge alien cultures intelligently. Next, she highlights the thought that understanding different cultures brings about, not only contempt, but praise as well; we could learn through understanding, and as much from forming our own opinions in a very objective manner. Then, she proceeds to her notion that with the 'barrier', we

only end up futility, as we are forced to ignore the practice of human reasoning, the main facility of being rational human beings, "In short, moral isolationism would lay down a general ban on moral reasoning. Essentially, this is the programme of immoralism..." In doing so, we extinguish our right and need to raise our opinions, state our reasonable claims, thus leaving us with no basis so as to contrasting or comparing our own cultures, in short, there would be no universal foundation for morality between cultural traditions.

In the latter part of her article, the author suggests that the 'barrier' only breeds inaction, a more destructive pattern of human thought than that of other philosophical schools of thought. "The moral isolationist's picture of separate, unmixable cultures is quite unreal", she points out, for she believes that cultures are, in one way or another, influenced by each other, one cannot be formed without the mixture of foreign cultures. This leads to her final indictment that, "Morally as well as physically, there is only one world, and we all have to live in it."

WHAT I HAVE LEARNED

- Definition of Moral Isolationism and its implications in the global context
- Moral Isolationism is unreal, thinking that we are not actually separate societies, but actually the result of mixing influences of cultures through time
- The barrier not only leads to immoralism, inaction and prejudice, but a denial to the power of moral reasoning.
- In one way or another, judging cultures will not be destructive, it could be constructive in truth, provided that we learn from alien customs in improving and progressing our own
- Morality and judgment should be universal, and understanding cultures should not be hastily put up

INTEGRATIVE QUESTIONS

- What is Moral Isolationism?
- How does Midgley contradict the view according to its implications, and according to moral reasoning, in principle?
- What are the reasons for us deny the barrier? What should we believe instead?

CHAPTER

John Stuart Mill: Utilitarianism

WHAT I EXPECT TO LEARN

I expect to learn the definition, scope, and claims John Stuart Mill states on the topics of Utilitarianism and its respective real-life applications and case-scenarios.

QUOTE

“Utilitarianism, therefore, could only attain its end by the general cultivation of nobleness of character, even if each individual were only benefited by the nobleness of others, and his own, so far as happiness is concerned, were a sheer deduction from the benefit.”

REVIEW

Utilitarianism has always interest, not only me, but every ethicist or philosopher who comes across its precepts. It is in the belief, that the Principle of Utility, has really this potential to be widely accepted by modern schools of thought (as I remember my high school adviser said, “Happiness is always the end of everything we do on this earth. We yearn for it). And I, before perusing the material was so excited of how the proponent of the theory would use textual narratives to explain the scope of his claims. However, it failed to my expectations, as the article was to ‘theoretical’, and so explanatory in principle and lacking in experiential examples, that John Stuart Mill somehow left his views susceptible for intellectual discourse from his counterparts. Even I, while finding it very promising and fascinating, was caught short of explanation of how I will be able to stand up for his work, which I found now very raw and badly needing modifications, noting his very ‘abstract’ and generalized concept to illustrate his so-called principles.

Utility, or more commonly known as the Greatest Happiness Principle, states that, “actions are right in proportion as they tend to promote happiness, wrong as they tend to produce the reverse of happiness. By happiness is intended pleasure, and the absence of pain; by unhappiness, pain and the privation of pleasure.” By mere glance of the definition, I was left to conclude that the principle would hit a roadblock when it equalized happiness and pleasure. And as I have anticipated, one refute to this was there would be other objects of happiness, as an end, other than pleasure. Mill also pointed out that happiness could be sort of ‘quantified’ through the qualitative comparisons of the individuals who perceive the utility of a same instance; he argued that a more intellectual person, who deems an end to be happy, will be

tantamount to granting the end 'more' happiness, than a less intellectual person, who he claims have lesser faculties for rational contemplation, who thinks that a certain end is unhappy. He says, "A being of higher faculties requires more to make him happy, is capable probably of more acute suffering, and certainly accessible to it at more points, than one of an inferior type; but in spite of these liabilities, he can never really wish to sink into what he feels to be a lower grade of existence." From this proposition, it is arguable that the principle would be lacking straightforward a sense of objectivism in dealing with human 'feelings' and inward thought.

Mill also pointed out that, with the principle of utility, virtues become a part of the end, which is pleasure. Such examples he was able to give was the love for power, for money, for fame, and the like. Yes, I agree to this extent, that in probably some cases, it is not more of physical pleasure we crave for, but for these virtues that give pleasure to our inner being, this will make us happy in the end. However, these virtues which become part of the end, and not only means to the end (pleasure or happiness), are in inherently egoistic, and so narrow that other pleasures could also be considered in the context. In fact he says, and as to end this review, "And hence the opponents of the utilitarian standard deem that they have a right to infer that there are other ends of human action besides happiness, and that happiness is not the standard approbation and disapprobation."

WHAT I HAVE LEARNED

- Definition and explanation of principle about Utilitarianism
- The principle is called the Greatest Happiness Principle because its end is happiness.
- Happiness is equated to pleasure and absence of pain.
- Virtues are not the end itself, but the part of the end.
- Opponents object that there could be other forms into which man seek as an end rather than pleasure

INTEGRATIVE QUESTIONS

- What is Utilitarianism?
- How does Mill explain Utility? How can pleasure be judged using quality and quantity?
- Explain how virtues become a part of the end, instead of the means of the end.

CHAPTER

James Rachels: The Debate over Utilitarianism

WHAT I EXPECT TO LEARN

I expect to learn the definition, scope, and claims James Rachels states on the debate over Utilitarianism and its respective real-life applications and case-scenarios.

QUOTE

“The most fundamental idea underlying the theory is that in order to determine whether an action would be right, we should look at what will happen as a result of doing it. If it were to turn out that some other matter is also important in determining the rightness, then Utilitarianism would be undermined at its very foundation.”

REVIEW

This has got to be my favorite so far! The article was surely a refreshing one, one of which gives the opportunity for a counterargument against utility to arise, yet gives the arguments of utility to defend itself, so much for my individual amazement for the art of debate and rebuttals. Moreover, I have to commend, once again, James Rachels for constructing the material in way that was illustrative and relatable. In the end, I was left of an impression that, although Utilitarianism has some grave defects theoretically, it does somehow offer potential for modification, even grounds to some of ethics most heralded principles that may emerge in these contemporary times.

Again, Rachels is the master of explanation, as he gave his three major arguments to object the very nature of Utilitarianism. First, is the case of racial strife, in which he points out that utility is in serious conflict with the concept of justice. Second, he points out the story of Ms. York as it violated her human rights, whereas utility tells that for the perverted policemen were, in concept, acting right. And third, and probably the most insightful, are the Backward-looking reasons, in which instances highlight that utility foregoes the essence of obligations, of past occurrences that affect future consequences, and yet utility just advocates the relevance of the end or of the future upshots of human action. In these 3 arguments put forth by Rachel, he distinguished the critical flaws of Utilitarianism- Justice – where utility favors the greater good despite the consequences of an obvious immoral action; Rights – where utility tolerates the pleasure of the greater party, despite the violation of the human right for privacy; and Backward-looking Reasons – where utility only considers the future consequences but ignores the past commitment, standing correct if the end is good, even though it breaks the obligations of the past. We could entirely judge Utilitarianism, as a whole, by taking heed of how Rachels exposed its weaknesses. Very convincing and very intuitive as we may say, the principle in itself is very raw and cannot resolve universal issues into which other considerations about moral consciousness take place.

In the latter part, Utilitarianism defended itself by stating also 3 counterarguments for the 3 respective propositions laid down by Rachels. The first being that such fictitious examples cannot be granted solid foundation, for utility only works out for real-life scenarios. To rebut this, we may argue that such fictitious stories could be substantial, as it points out hypothetically the theoretical disadvantages of utility; thus, weakening the first line of defense. The second line proceeds into modifying the general notion of Utilitarianism into Rule-Utilitarianism, by means of establishing rules and empowering it to be able to judge accordingly the consequences of actions. In this predicament, we are lead to the premise that the judgment lies now on established rules, and not on moral reasoning performed by human thought. Although it resolves objectively the mishaps transpired by the three cases, it leads us into questioning about the credibility of rules, which are seemingly subjective; and more so, "Who else establishes the rules and into what basis therefore?" And the third line of defense, lies solely on the human imperfection for intuition, as it states that we deem wrongly of actions based on emotion, which could have been influenced by nature and nurture; we cannot depend on our moral compass once it dictates that Utilitarianism has erred once more.

To construe, utility has its strengths, which is why it's still renowned to date for its radical notions. However, it does suffer from crucial ailments, into which the modern context of morality could easily debunk its forwarded claims. Pleasure seems to be a very abstract call, and in today's lifestyle, there are countless instances into which the association of pleasure and happiness is deemed disturbing, into which the dilemma of choosing over common good over individual rights, into which the past must also be taken into mind over future consequences. There should always be rational basis, one of which that is universal, and takes into account every person's happiness, every person's welfare, even if principle demands the subjectivity of the rightness or wrongness of an act.

WHAT I HAVE LEARNED

- Utilitarianism is disturbing in a number of its facets
- Justice comes in conflict with utility
- Utility finds its flaw when dealing with real-life situations of human rights violations
- The past must be considered in performing the future; utility does not
- Utility cannot admit its own flaws, there must be something screwed within the view

INTEGRATIVE QUESTIONS

- Explain the three weaknesses of utility.
- In your opinion, do the three lines of defenses have substance? How come?
- What could be concepts that could be further modified so as utility could be sound yet simple?

CHAPTER

Immanuel Kant: The Categorical Imperative

WHAT I EXPECT TO LEARN

I expect to learn the definition, scope, and claims Immanuel states on his Categorical Imperative and its respective real-life applications and case-scenarios.

QUOTE

“Therefore, nothing but the idea of the law in itself, which admittedly is present only in a rational being – so far as it, and not an expected result, is the ground determining the will- can constitute that preeminent good which we call moral, a good which is already present in the person acting on this idea and has not to be awaited from the result.”

REVIEW

Before reading the article, I have been very eager to know about the Categorical Imperative, for it has this certain hype that a lot of people, classmates and professors alike, have been mentioning for the past months or years so. And upon finishing the article, it made perfect sense to me, that Kant’s views on morality has been grounded sufficiently even by its theoretical context, which seems also agreeing with its practical applications. I have to say that Immanuel Kant’s Categorical Imperative is one of the few theories worth studying for, because a beginning ethicists like me, could certainly use some leverage for future rational and logical contemplation by the mere foundation of the author’s notions.

Kant started off by underscoring his view that an action is ought to be judged, in accord of morality, by determining the means rather than the end. He presupposed that, “A good will is not good because of what it effects or accomplishes-because of its fitness for attaining some proposed end: it is good through its willing alone-that is good in itself.” As he states this, he also introduced one of the pillars of the Categorical Imperative – the good will. To what I have understand about the reading, it simply pertains to the motive, the intention, the cause, or even the driving reason, for a person to actuate in a certain manner, and to behave as he ‘wills’ to; and for this given premise, the good will is basis for judgment in determining the morality of an action, contrary to what previous writers believed in – that a morality of an action is based upon the end that it transpires. The question that confronts us now is into how we will discern the morality of an act based on its means, and in further explanation, what determines the goodness of a good will? Moreover, it we were to judge an action by only focusing on the means by which it was carried through, what are the constraints, limitations, or and even the conditionals into which the moral ascendancy of an action be judged accordingly?

He follows through by distinguishing the ‘driving forces’ by which men achieve ends by different means – good will and duty. He states that, and building up from his previous arguments, that an action is good

because a person has intended it not because for the sake of duty or abidance of law, but for the reason that he has the initiative, driven by good will, to surpass this duties, brought about the 'goodness of his purpose', in acting upon his intention regardless of its results. And this brings us to his ultimate argument, the statement of his thesis by elucidating to us his two views on his Categorical Imperative.

The first view holds, "Act only on that maxim through which you can at the same time will that it should become a universal law". This imperative implies the objectivity by which means could be judged, Kant supposes that an action be good, if a person is in the conviction, that if it were be done according to his own purpose, it must be in accordance to the goodness it results when it is uphold or applied by everyone regardless of any condition or inclination that may sway it from its proposed consequence. This view is certainly a well-balanced one, and can counteract or even defend the arguments that immoral action can usher in into the context.

The second version, on the other hand, claims that, "Act in such a way that you always treat humanity, whether in your own person or in the person of any other, never simply as a means but always at the same time as an end." Although, the version seems to be a build-up of the first, it diverts itself by mentioning that rational beings are objective ends in themselves, thus realigning itself in a totally different niche the first version has come up in the first place. Furthermore, he did not give any empirical case-scenarios into which the second version could be illustrated, and it puzzled me rather than enlighten me of his follow-up notion. However, I ought to ignore the vagueness of the second matter, for I have come to a full understanding of what his first version entailed, and by comprehending the essence of it, I believe it has already sufficed to encompass the wholeness of the entire material's substance.

WHAT I HAVE LEARNED

- Definition and explanation of principle about the Categorical Imperative
- It's all about the means, not about the end after all
- A good mean is not merely complying with the moral duty, it's about exceeding the duty
- To exceed the duty then, is to have a good will that surpasses the minimum moral obligation
- To behave morally, one must think that if the action ought to be conceived and achieved, would it be desirable for everyone to think in this manner (supposing that it is inherently good in the first place)

INTEGRATIVE QUESTIONS

- What is the Categorical Imperative?
- How does Kant justify the moral worth of an action by this? Give examples.
- What are his two versions of the imperative?

CHAPTER

Aristotle: Happiness and Virtue

WHAT I EXPECT TO LEARN

I expect to learn the definition, scope, and claims Aristotle states on the topics of Happiness and Virtue and its respective real-life applications and case-scenarios.

QUOTE

“If happiness is activity in accordance with virtue, it is reasonable that it should be in accordance with the highest virtue and this will be that of the best thing in us.”

REVIEW

There are two suppositions I’ve made in my mind prior to reading Aristotle’s article of this book. One would be the historical context into which Aristotle had been surrounded on that area, as I supposed that this had a tremendous influence of how his philosophy or the philosophy of that era was molded; I assumed that without the emergence of modern technology (hitech), the ideologies and theories of that time bore its defense by mere rationalism, of which occurs through sheer contemplation, reasoning, and human discourse; the scenarios to prove his arguments were not that contemporary, and hence just measly and debatable compared to the previous authors’ given examples. Second, is I anticipated that his writing would be antiquated, and old-fashioned, exhibiting the literature prevalent of their time- emphasizing rhetoric and elegance of delivery, rather than organization and substance (although it was insightful in an absurd manner). With these expectations in mind I set myself not to be bored or disagreeing in disposition when I start to tackle his writing. In the end, I’ve come up, or should I say, concluded some ‘generalized’ concepts of morality that was presented upon by Aristotle.

What stuck into mind was Aristotle was in a way, a proponent of Utilitarianism, for he emphasized happiness as the end of every action, and stated that human is inclined to, consciously or subconsciously, lead towards happiness as the ends of the motives. In areas of differing nature may seek with different goals, such as control for politics, money for trade, and enlightenment for mature men, all of which cannot be the end, for happiness is still the root of all these intended outcomes. Aristotle pointed out that happiness is what drives men to behave in moral standards (which he states differs in terms of age, culture, and background), and to achieve such happiness, men should have regards with virtue. Although associated, virtue and

happiness are not synonymous; the former is the mean, while the latter is the end. Thus, Aristotle claims that, good actions come from virtue, and good man act upon virtues to achieve happiness; a good man is therefore the one who ultimately succeeds in achieving true happiness. Notable in this premise is that, although happiness has been historically mistaken to pleasure, Aristotle makes clear that good men result in good ends (happiness through virtue), and pleasure, which can be equated to happiness not in all circumstances via moral and intellectual pleasure, does not ascertain man of good action (carnal pleasure in itself connotes immoral acts). To summarize, Aristotle raises his views of happiness, which is found morally through virtue, and intellectually through reasoning. Moral action is that which is good in accordance to how happiness, not just pleasure is achieved.

WHAT I HAVE LEARNED

- Happiness and Virtue according to Aristotle
- Difference of Happiness and Pleasure
- Means of how to achieve happiness

INTEGRATIVE QUESTIONS

- What is Aristotle's view of happiness?
- How is it related to Virtue and Pleasure?
- What are the acts Aristotle emphasizes to achieve happiness?

CHAPTER

Joel Feinberg: The Nature and Value of Rights

WHAT I EXPECT TO LEARN

I expect to learn the definition, scope, and claims Joel Feinberg states on the Nature and Value of Rights and its respective real-life applications and case-scenarios.

QUOTE

“Indeed, respect for persons (this is an intriguing idea) may simply be respect for their rights, so that there cannot be the one without the other; and what is called “human dignity” may simply be the recognizable capacity to assert claims. To respect a person then, or to think of him as possessed of human dignity, simply is to think of him as a potential maker of claims.”

REVIEW

Model

Feinberg arranged his literature in a very reader-friendly manner by using a ‘thought experiment’, a rather metaphorical perspective, which he calls, Nowheresville. He then elaborates how Nowheresville subsists by stating the conditions into which its constituents behave socially without the concept of rights. Even without such ideology, Nowheresville, he states that, in way pleasing Kant’s views, the people behave conscientiously (they are inherently driven by duty to act moral sensibility, but if otherwise, no one will be wronged for no one is really accountable for anyone); behave according to personal desert (‘higher’ persons have the opportunity to award their ‘subordinates’ when they deem them to be fitting for the recognition, if the subordinates are not given, even when they highly expect it, they cannot blame their ‘boss’ because he has under no obligation to do so in the first place); and behave according to sovereign monopoly of rights (when one wrongs another, he does not apologize to the wronged person, but fundamentally to a higher being, thus the sovereign one, who claims the rules for good behavior).

View

Feinberg then asserts that forget the vision of this thought experiment, regardless of the logicality and morality the environment of principles would entail, especially of the ideologies he blended into it, and focus rather on what he didn’t – the rights itself. He states that, focally highlighting the first condition of duties, rights are correlated with it; rights always entail

duties, but not necessarily vice-versa. By this he means that rights, in essence, are driven by duties by people to one another because they claim it towards one another, hence the notion of claim-rights. The concept of rights butts in around occasions when persons can claim of what is due to them from other persons. In Nowheresville, they have no concept of rights, and in effect, they cannot claim what is due to from others, instead they claim it from other sources. When rights are intact, everyone has then accountability for each one, for everyone has the right to claim, or the claim for rights, towards one another.

Critique

Precisely put, “Having rights, or course, makes claiming possible; but it is claiming that gives rights their special moral significance. This feature of rights is connected in a way with the customary rhetoric about what it is to be a human being. Having rights enables us to “stand up like men”, to look others in the eye, and to feel in some fundamental way the equal of anyone.” From this quote I am well convinced of Feinberg’s arguments of why rights should be established in the first place, as it will also establish each person’s human dignity, and hence, accountability for such. With rights, we have duties, and in violating these duties against another, and not just against a sovereign construct, others can righteously claim they have been wronged by another. By this I mean that, we just not assert that we have been wronged, but we could claim as well that we have been wronged, and the other party, having violated his duty by violated another’s right, could be grounds for a consequence. Thus, rights would entail that there would be fairness and equality instilled in the environment, in which Nowheresville about. When rights are in place, we respect each one’s dignity, and in the ultimate end, a respect for the thought, that every person has the power to claim against one as well.

WHAT I HAVE LEARNED

- The importance of rights
- Nowheresville’s downsides
- Correlation of rights and duties
- Concept of deserts and sovereign monopoly of rights
- With rights, we can claim, thus, we become equal

INTEGRATIVE QUESTIONS

- What are the conditions of Nowheresville? Explain the 3 concepts incorporated within
- According to Feinberg, how are rights characterized?
- .When rights are put into place, explain how Nowheresville could possibly behave.

CHAPTER

Ronald Dworkin: Taking Rights Seriously

WHAT I EXPECT TO LEARN

I expect to learn the definition, scope, and claims Ronald Dworkin states about his work on Taking Rights Seriously, and their respective real-life applications and case-scenarios.

QUOTE

“So, though the constitutional system adds something to the protection of moral rights against the Government, it falls far short of guaranteeing these rights, or even establishing what they are....”

REVIEW

In my opinion Dworkin, in an excerpt of his work here, plays safe with how he establishes his thesis; it was a very quintessential view of how one could explain the underlying correlation of morality and rights, but in my opinion, the author falls short on bearing the details of its implications and of how the subject, which is in this case, citizens versus the government, could go about in tapping the untouched yet essential aspects of the context of human rights- moral, legal, and constitutional.

Model

This is the real-life scenario I found suitable to delve for the material: the anecdote of the beginnings of the anti-riot law, which showcased itself last decade in the Chicago Seven trial. The story mainly encompasses the crucial argument that I deem the core of the read, which is the right of free speech. Dworkin emphasized in example the many lapses of law in going about cases that involve such human right, even going to extents of circumstances where competing right comes forth. The story starts with the accusation to the defendants – that they were conspiring for the motive of causing large-scale riots, yet asserting that the riots would be a pure exercise of political equality. This is certainly how the freedom of speech contained in the First Amendment manifests itself trying to safeguard a moral right although in it is legal in nature.

View

Dworkin relentlessly put out his clear-cut view on rights, mainly on its implementation, in his final sentence, “If the government does not take rights seriously, then it does not take law seriously either.” He also reveals in his writing several accounts noteworthy about competing rights: the view of siding on the greater good’s welfare; the difference of doing right and claiming a right, and that it does not correspond mutually; and how citizens could have the right against the government itself. On his first view, he just emphasized the implications of having competing rights, wherein one individual applies his right in the expense of other’s right, may it be voluntary or otherwise. The second view holds that doing the right

thing does not necessarily manifest his claim-rights, or may it be practicing a claim-right to do the wrong action, or even an attempt to do a right course of action but can't be wronged when he doesn't pursue it; this associations make the differentiating factor to enlighten of how morality cannot be always synonymous with legality. The third view is a liberal one, in a sense that, for certain instances, like public demonstration, the freedom of speech cannot be, in any way, be curtailed by the government even if it means going with the wave against them.

Critique

The author is in his comfort zone with this part in his literature, where he strikes through in abstracted concepts, or courses of actions, but does not delve to the specifics, considering the context of the subject involves crime, rights, and the legal system; however, I appreciate how the effect of his views could lead to a paradigm-shift to legislators and philosophers. Human Rights is what I consider the single most significant component of morality, because it is held by law, and by itself can be objective in times, it is a good foundation of how real life could be dealt with. So much with the hypothetical and theoretical notions, rights and government law are two of the best subjects to read about when "practicalizing" ethics. Dworkin, although safe in his stands, fuses different elements into his claims, such that it mentions Kant's universality, Mill's end-justification and greater good. At the end of the day, there will always be conflicts between the justice and legal system and the moral views citizens hold collectively.

WHAT I HAVE LEARNED

- Implications of competing rights
- Citizens have their own rights, and this includes the right to be against the government, if moral sensitivity compels to do so in certain instances
- Citizens may have human rights, but in exercising this, they must take into account its bearing with other's rights
- Doing the right is different from claiming a right

INTEGRATIVE QUESTIONS

- What is Dworkin's view on free speech?
- What are competing rights? Give examples. What are its implications?
- Why do rights need to be taken seriously?
- What is the connection of rights, morality, and law?

CHAPTER

John Rawls: A Theory of Justice

WHAT I EXPECT TO LEARN

I expect to learn the definition, scope, and claims John Rawls states about his work on A Theory of Justice, and their respective real-life applications and case-scenarios.

QUOTE

“Injustice, then, is simply inequalities that are not to the benefit of all

REVIEW

Rawls article here blatantly stated many ideas that lead to more questions; it was left open-ended and it was evidently a part of a bigger picture of one of his renowned publications. I was admittedly confused with what I have read, and I was left to realizing that morality, as patterned in this CMP book, is in a progression of time. Starting off with antiquated yet classic theories of moral sensibility, it now creates a new spectrum of views brought about by different vistas of ideas by prominent thought-leaders. And this, A Theory of Justice, is what I presume a tip of the icing of how contemporary moral problems will arise in the following articles and chapters of CMP, and sadly I will not be able to continue my reflections with the succeeding chapters. Nevertheless, Rawls, in this literature, put up very vague, but vital theses with how justice should be perceived by society.

Model

He first resembles a parallel world into which two conditions are to be assumed; this was in effect vital to let the reader grasp the understanding of what justice ought to be according Rawls. His justice system emphasized fairness; hence he coined the phrase in the writing, “justice as fairness”. He presumed that to attain this level of living, people populating the world in different societies are given fair treatment by supplying these preconditions: each one is unknowledgeable (ignorant can be considered) of his social class, his niche, his inbuilt personal characteristics and abilities, and how society is organized originally from point-blank (in comparison to the mindfulness of how societies work to date). Due to these, everyone is equalized, no advantages or disadvantages whatsoever; every little piece of what they ought to know in igniting their own self-interest is then concealed. This is the initial world into which Rawls could elucidate his concept of justice.

View

Rawls goes on further by implementing two principles in this kind of set-up, “First: Each person is to have an equal right to the most extensive basic liberty for others. Second: Social and economic inequalities are to be arranged so that they are both (a) reasonably expected to be to everyone’s advantage, and (b) attaches to positions and offices open to all.” Rawls believes that a society into which

his preconditions are places strictly, will behave, in hypothetical assumptions, fairly, seeking to heart and mind for nothing more and nothing less of his or her own 'improvement'. The theme of the justice thereby creates the illusion of how advantages and disadvantages are on level ground when these principles apply. Justice for Rawls is avoidance in fluctuation of 'improvement' of one person in which another's 'improvement' is compromised.

Critique

At first, I was keen in refuting these kind of thought processes like Rawls's, as I believe that hypothetical assumptions of a real-world scenario is totally incompatible when one grounds it with 'unreal' assumptions forsaking humanly instinctive behavior and dispositions. Although Rawls put up a very theoretical set-up to isolate the elements and consequently let the 'justice' he pertains to surface in the environment, I am not satisfied with how he carried through his thesis, but I was satisfied to be informed of how he carried out his motives for his intended end. Initially, I could have left the entire read altogether, for I don't find any convincing real-life implications of the subject matter stated concisely; however, I was surprised to know that he was plunging to a level of thought that I deem to be important in resolving conflicts between human rights and justice (the former article by Rachels proved to be in conflict with the two). It was vague to point out that fairness is indeed one of the most important, if not the most, ingredient of justice; and lack thereof or inconsistency in following through it is justified as injustice. Intuitively, newbie ethicists like me would agree to that notion, as from the solid ground the virtue of equality is what creates and ends a justice system in all legal or moral schemes in different cultures and societies. But in the end, I would still believe that there is more to fairness and unfairness to be associated with justice and injustice, and Rawls makes it correct that these facets are not completely synonymous with each other respectively. And I am left to assume that the last article would elucidate me on this matter hopefully.

WHAT I HAVE LEARNED

- Justice is grounded on fairness, no favor for any special person, but they are not necessarily synonymous
- As much as possible, the ideal context would not be prejudiced, advantage or disadvantage, everyone must be equally benefited. And if such occasions may arise, it ought to be for a fair improvement of all the parties involved
- Any inconsistencies of 'improvement' contrary to the whole, is considered injustice

INTEGRATIVE QUESTIONS

- What is Rawls's theory of justice?
- Explain the world which he assumes. What are the conditions?
- What principles are in place in this set-up?
- What can be said of justice in this kind of world?

CHAPTER**Annette Baier: The Need for More Than Justice****WHAT I EXPECT TO LEARN**

I expect to learn the definition, scope, and claims Annette Baier states about her work on *The Need for More Than Justice*, and their respective real-life applications and case-scenarios.

QUOTE

“The emphasis on care goes with a recognition of the often unchosen nature of the responsibilities of those who give care both of children who care for their aged or infirm parents, and of parents who care for the children they in fact have.”

REVIEW

This was certainly a great head start in tackling feministic views in moral contexts. In fact, I actually liked the theme of the article, very appealing of the innate longings of human behavior, such is truly the mark of genuine feminism in writing. Baier’s writing seems to build on a foundation that was established by Gilligan, putting forth the strong and humanly arguments favoring the feministic side of morality, and to extents involving social structures. To be honest, I admired how CMP placed this as the last article for Chapter 1, as it balances all throughout the strong and manly theses put forth by the previous writers; indeed Baier’s and Gilligan’s stands put the humanitarian element within the reader, somehow offsetting what has become a total rational experience since the onset of the book. The reading was supposedly targeting the weaknesses of the Patriarchal history of ethics, favoring the Kant, Nietzsche, and Rawls; and Baier, in my view, successfully zeroed out any prejudice that any passive reader could instill in his mind as ethical principles.

Baier’s main idea is attributed to Gilligan’s original point-of-view – that the conventional rationalism put on by Kant was only applicable when women were still not empowered long ago; today, when women have vast societal contributions, feminism must synergize with rationalism to provide a more modern approach towards justice. What Baier is particularly pertaining to feminism is the justice of care, that contrary to the preconceived notion of justice which is very legal and lacks the necessary human emotion element to it, care is a psychological construct that must prevail. She mentions the facts that women who are more emotionally mature than men, should also have the voice now to divulge their sentiments, that society need not be dictated by the patriarchal principles put by and for men, and that feminism has its place on the legal and moral system in society. The justice of care holds that moral action is justified when it is done with ‘care’, something that is deeply rooted by a “felt concern for the good of others and for community with them”. And this view holds its power through the valid psychological claims human nature attributes itself as it transcends just the superficial legalities of the moral system by being humane,

in our yearning from infancy to belong in a community/family and having equality and objectivity of power.

Definitely, what human action ought to do is not just for compliance to our rational dimensions, abiding by the social rules of conduct – to do or not to do (which are in themselves imposed rules and rights). What Baier intends is, that in the real-world where humans naturally behave, there's much more room for emotional, or should I say feminist, attitudes towards dealing with decisions involving moral sensitivity. One does not only think of what is stipulated constitutionally as law, or what social norms dictate as morally justified actions, but more so how the 'self' mediates itself in the battle between the intellectual facility of men, and their instinctive and overpowering inclination towards caring and loving. And for Gilligan and Baier, and for me as well, care has its part with justice, not in the sense that we will totally omit the rational dimension of morality, but we are also entitled to provide a human touch in considering the fiber of our moral principles. And in the ultimate end, the heart matters as one realizes, as so, justice should then possess the human touch to it.

WHAT I HAVE LEARNED

- Feminism movement is getting stronger as the societal contexts from the progression of time favors it
- It's not all about rationality to establish justice, and even ethical principles, 'care', as proven by scientific psychological studies, is indeed a vital element of morality
- Care stemmed from having mothers be the 'care-givers' of their children long ago
- When society had been leveled off in terms of gender discrimination, feminism ought to be harmonized with intellectualism

INTEGRATIVE QUESTIONS

- What is the Justice of Care according to Baier?
- What is Feminism? When and how did it start?
- What should be done with rationalism and feminism in our contemporary time?